

Primary Care Patient Handbook: OUR "PACT" WITH YOU

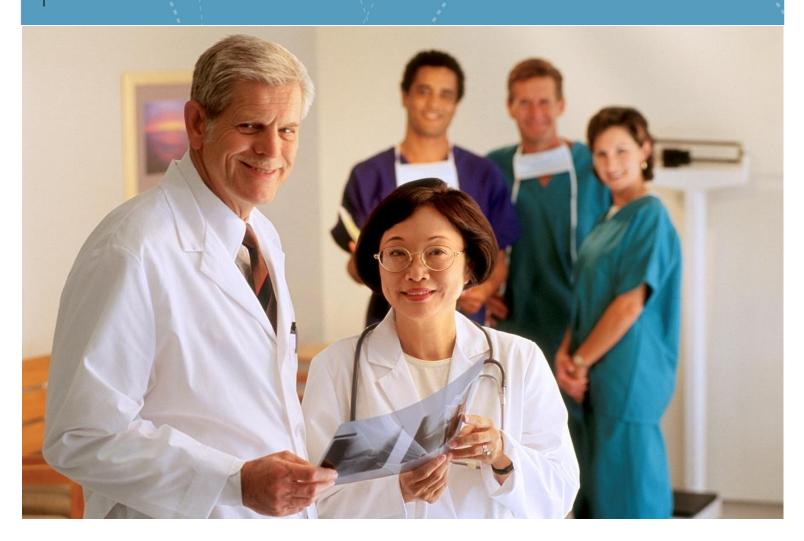




Table of Contents

Welcome Letter	p .1
Introduction to Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT)	p. 2
Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program	pp. 3-5
Co-Managed Care	p. 6
How to Access VA Care—Telephone Care Program	p. 6
MyHealth <i>e</i> Vet	p. 7
Release of Information	p. 8
Pharmacy/Telephone System	p. 8-9
Urgent Care Services	p. 9
Emergency Care Services	p. 10
Specialty Care Services & Women's Health	p. 11
Mental Health Services, Suicide Prevention & National VA Hotline	p. 12
Social Work Services & Advance Directives	p. 13
Guide to Long Term Care & Caregiver Support	p. 14-15
Patient Advocacy Program	p. 15
Eligibility & Benefits	p. 16
Phone numbers & websites to know	pp. 16-1

Welcome to the VA Puget Sound Health Care System!

We are transforming our healthcare system into an organization that defines excellence in the 21st century. Our patient- centered, team-based model of health care is flexible, comprehensive, and holistic. We are committed to providing personalized, high quality, accessible health care to Veterans.

VA's PACT

VA's PACT approach to health care will result in

- 1 Healthier and more satisfied patients
- 2 Coordinated and holistic care
- 3 Streamlined delivery of services
- 4 Lower costs for health care

This is our PACT with you —to deliver excellence in every aspect of patient care. YOU, the Veteran, are the most important member of your health care team. YOU are the reason we are here, and we invite you to take an active role in your health care.

BE A PARTNER ON YOUR PACT TEAM!

I am a member of the	Team.
My PACT Primary Care Provider is:	
My PACT RN care Manager is:	
My PACT clinical associate is:	
My PACT clerk (PSA) is:	
My PACT pharmacist is:	

We want to make it easy for you to access your VA health benefits. This handbook explains the basics of Primary Care in the VA Puget Sound Healthcare System to help you find your way.

Thank you for your service to our country! It is our duty and honor to serve you!

What is PACT?

A Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) is each Veteran working together with health care professionals to plan for whole-person care and life-long health and wellness focusing on

- PARTNERSHIPS with Veterans
- ACCESS TO CARE using diverse methods
- COORDINATED CARE among team members
- TEAM-BASED CARE with Veterans as the center of their PACT

You, the Veteran, are at the center of the care team. **You** are the focus. *Our PACT* with you is to deliver excellence in every aspect of patient care.

VA's PACT approach offers many ways to access health care. In addition to personal visits with your primary care provider, you may schedule visits with other members of your team. You can also communicate with your health care team over the telephone or through MyHealtheVet's online Secure Messaging system (www.myhealth.va.gov).



Veterans Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Program

Veterans receive clinical preventive services from their primary care providers. These services include immunizations to prevent disease, screening tests to detect disease at an early stage, and behavioral counseling to avoid or reduce risk factors for disease.

PACT care is a model of wellness, prevention, and health promotion. We want to help you take care of yourself and so we are committed to partnering with you in your efforts to incorporate healthy behaviors into your daily life.

The behaviors listed below are the ones that have the most impact on your health. We call them the **Nine Healthy Living Messages**.



9 Healthy Living Messages

1. Eat Wisely

Eat a variety of foods including vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Limit salt, fat, sugar, and alcohol.

MOVE! is a SELF-MANAGEMENT weight loss program for Veterans that encourages healthy lifestyle changes. It is free for all Veterans and offers: your own weight loss plan, information on healthy eating from a dietician, support from staff and other Veterans, classes to teach you how to live healthier, and telephone calls to keep you motivated.

VA MOVE program website http://www.move.va.gov/ To enroll in the *MOVE!* program and/or to get more information call toll free: **1-800-329-8387 (VETS) Extension 76683**



2. Be Physically Active

Avoid inactivity. Anything is better than nothing. Aim for at least 2½ hours of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week. Consider joining the *MOVE!* program today.

For more information, go to the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans at http://www.health.gov/PAGuidelines/

3. Maintain a Healthy Weight

If you need to lose weight, losing even a little will help. If you are of normal weight, maintain it. If you feel you would benefit from individualized nutritional counseling with a dietician please contact your PACT team for referral information today.

For more information about healthy eating, go to these websites: My HealtheVet website http://www.myhealth.va.gov

2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans http://www.health.gov/DietaryGuidelines/

4. Be Tobacco Free

Quitting smoking is the single most important thing you can do to improve your health and protect the health of your family members. Don't use tobacco in any form.

For more quit-smoking resources, go to http://www.healthfinder.gov/, and search for "smoking."

5. Limit Alcohol

Adults should drink alcohol only moderately, if at all. For men, no more than two drinks a day. For women, no more than one drink a day. Please ask your healthcare provider if it is safe for you to drink alcohol.

6. Get Recommended Screenings & Immunizations

Routine health screenings and immunizations are an important part of comprehensive preventative health care. Based upon your age, gender, lifestyle factors, personal health habits, and other health conditions, your health care provider may recommend

appropriate screenings and immunizations.

For more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can find a list of the recommended services for men and women at these websites:

http://www.cdc.gov http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/



7. Manage Stress

Pay attention to stress. Learn about ways to help you manage and reduce your stress. If you find you are unable to manage your stress and feel you need help coping, contact your care team to discuss programs that may help.

8. Be Safe

Find out how to prevent sexually transmitted infections, falls, and motor vehicle crashes. Take action to protect yourself and those you love from harm.

9. Get Involved in Your Health Care

You can take an active role in your health care in many ways:

- Please arrive **30 minutes before** your scheduled appointment time to get your vital signs checked, and complete any necessary health screenings.
- Bring your VA photo I.D. card to your appointment.
- Give your treatment team accurate and complete information about:
- Your current health problems
- Your concerns about your health
- Past illnesses and hospitalizations
- Your medicines, including over-the-counter and herbals
- Plan ahead for your visits by writing down the questions and concerns you want to raise; share them with your provider at the beginning of each visit
- Ask for written information and instructions you can keep and share with your family;
 ask questions about anything that's not clear to you
- Gather information about your health problems from your treatment team, the VA library, and websites such as My HealtheVet
- Participate in decisions about your health care—you and your provider should agree on what will be done during each step of your care
- Know your medicines and why you take each one
- Ask when and how you will get results of any tests or treatments
- Let your team know if you face any obstacles to your care or if your condition changes
- Have a family member or friend come with you to help you, if you wish
- Your provider may ask you to have outside medical records sent to the VA to coordinate your care. Your community provider may require you to sign a release of information for this. It is your responsibility to do this to ensure records are sent in a timely manner.

Co-Managed Care

We encourage you to receive all your medical care through the VA and have a single VA primary care provider who coordinates all aspects of your care. However, we are willing to work with your community providers to coordinate your health care; we call this Co-managed Care.

VA providers are under no obligation to follow a treatment or medication plan recommended by community physicians if they disagree with that plan or if that plan conflicts with national or local policies related to patient care or prescription medications. If your community provider writes a prescription for a medicine that is not on the VA list of approved medicines, your VA provider may offer you another medicine that is very similar, safe, and effective for your condition.

How to Access VA Health Care

Your PACT team can serve you best if you <u>CALL IN ADVANCE</u> when you have questions or a medical problem that is not an emergency. Many questions can be answered over the phone so that you don't have to make an unnecessary visit. If you do need to be seen, we can usually make an appointment for you within 24 hours.

VA Telephone Care Program

During Business Hours Please Call:

1-800-329-8387 extension 71234 or (253) 583-1234 to:

 Make an appointment with your PACT team, cancel an appointment, or reschedule a routine primary care appointment.

"PLEASE DON'T BE A "NO-SHOW"

If you are unable to make it to your appointment, please call as far in advance as possible (preferably at least 24 hours). This will allow us to serve another Veteran's needs.

 Schedule appointments for all clinical areas, including primary/ambulatory care, community



based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), and specialty clinics

- To request refills call the pharmacy automated telephone refill line, available 24 hours a day 7 days a week
- Get advice about your general health care concerns
- Ask general questions about your care at the VA

Bremerton CBOC patients ONLY: if you need to make, cancel, or reschedule a routine primary care appointment, please call: 360-782-0129.

My HealtheVet

My HealtheVet is a website created especially for Veterans. You can use it to:

- Get accurate health information from sources you can trust
- Refill your VA prescriptions and check the status of your refills
- Create your own personal health journal
- Read VA news and feature stories
- Link to VA benefits and services
- Communicate electronically with your VA provider for non-urgent health care questions and issues
- View your VA appointments
- View your lab reports and selected parts of your VA medical record

Registration and Authentication

To take advantage of all the features of My Health eVet, you need to register on the website AND be authenticated in person at the VA. The authentication process protects your privacy and your personal health information. Please refer to the website: http://www.myhealth.va.gov or speak with a member of your PACT team.





Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER) Health

• Free, voluntary program

- Shares certain parts of your health records between VA, DoD and Private Partner MultiCare
- Secure network between partners

Website: http://www.pugetsound.va.gov/vler.asp

Call 1-877-771-8537

Release of Information

Release of Information Office staff will be happy to assist with documents related to your health care. We can provide:

Access to and copies of your medical records

- Completion of forms for benefits, insurance, and other reasons.
- Please note that ALL forms to be filled out by your provider must go through ROI first!

Contact us:

American Lake: Building 19, Phone: (253) 583-1507

Seattle: Building 100 (Basement), Room BD-140, Phone: (206) 764-2014

VA Pharmacy Benefits

VA has excellent pharmacy benefits that include mail out pharmacy services for refills and local pharmacy access for medications that you need to start right away.. If you are transferring your prescriptions to VA, your VA providers may need to replace some of your medications with similar medications carried by the VA pharmacy. By law, VA pharmacy cannot fill a prescription written by a non-VA provider. If appropriate, your VA provider may re-write these prescriptions to be filled by our pharmacy. VA is not responsible to pay for medications filled at a private pharmacy.

Pharmacy Telephone Care System

This system is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to check on or refill your prescriptions. You need a touchtone telephone to use this service.

You can request refills in ANY of these 3 ways:

- Call the automated telephone refill system using a touch-tone phone: **1-800-329-8387**, press **3** for the pharmacy line.
- **Before you start, have at hand your full Social Security Number and the prescription number printed on the bottle**
- Use My HealtheVet: http://www.myhealth.va.gov, you can:
 - Order refills
 - · Check the status of a refill
 - View and track prescription history
- Mail or drop off the refill slip that comes with your prescription

Request your refills at least 14 days before you need more medicine to allow time for your prescription to be refilled and mailed to you. Refills are processed for mail only. Window pickup is reserved for inpatient discharges and new prescriptions that you need to start right away.

If you experience any problems with our refill system, please call Pharmacy Customer Service: American Lake Division (253) 583-3000 Seattle Division (206) 277-4000

Pharmacy Co-payments

Depending on your eligibility, you may need to pay a co-payment for medications. Depending on your finances, you may apply for free medications. You can get information about patient eligibility from the benefits counselor at your local VA facility.

Urgent Care

What is Urgent Care?

If you have a medical problem that is **not** an emergency, but may be more urgent than a routine appointment, please call to talk to a nurse to determine the most appropriate way to evaluate your medical issue.

Only urgent medical issues will be treated in the Urgent Care. Examples of urgent medical problems include lacerations, burns, and fractures. If your problem is not deemed urgent by the triage staff, you will be redirected to your PACT team.

Please, **CALL FIRST** to avoid unnecessary wait times. We can serve you and your fellow Veterans more efficiently when visits are planned. Frequently, we can get you an appointment with your own provider within 24 hours.

The nurse advice line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 1-800-329-8387, option 4

Seattle Emergency Department is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

American Lake Urgent Care is open 8:00am-4:30pm.
There are NO EMERGENCY SERVICES AT AMERICAN LAKE.

Emergency Care

What is Emergency Care?

A medical emergency is when you have an injury or illness that is so severe that without immediate treatment, you could become severely ill or even die. Use your best judgment. In the event of an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest local emergency room. If you live near the Seattle VA, you should go there for emergency care.

There are no emergency services available at the American Lake Division or CBOC's. DO NOT come to these facilities in an emergency.

Do I need to call the VA before I obtain emergency care?

- NO. You do not need to call the VA before obtaining emergency care.
- If you are admitted, your friends, family, or hospital staff should contact the nearest VA as soon as possible to provide information about your emergency room visit. If you refuse to be transferred to a VA hospital, the VA will not pay for any further care.
- You may have to pay for a portion of your emergency care, depending on the care you
 received. Your local VA medical center's patient benefits counselor can explain these
 factors and how they affect your obligation to pay for part of your care.
- Your other insurance (TRICARE, Medicare, Medicaid, Blue Cross, etc.) may change your VA coverage for emergency services. Your local VA medical center's patient benefits counselor can answer these questions.

Where can I get more information?

- You can get more answers to your questions on the Health Administration Center Internet website at http://www.va.gov/hac/hacmain.asp under non-VA Care.
- If you have more specific questions, please contact:

- Patient benefits counselor: 1-800-329-8387 (VETS), Dial 1 + ext. 76542 to speak with a patient benefits counselor within VA Puget Sound.
- Please note that this number is applicable for both American Lake and Seattle Divisions, including Community Based Outpatient Clinics.

Specialty Care

Your primary care provider is your gateway to VA health care. If you need to see a specialist, your primary care provider will request a consult for you. Then, the specialty clinic will contact you about an appointment or the next step in your care. Some examples of specialty services available at the VA include: optometry (eye care), audiology (hearing and tinnitus), podiatry (foot care), and nutrition (dietician). We also offer kidney, endocrine, cardiology, vascular, general surgery, neurology, orthopedics, dermatology, spinal cord injury, oncology, and other specialty services.

Women's Health

VA is committed to meeting women Veterans' comprehensive and unique needs by delivering the highest quality health care, while offering the privacy, dignity, and sensitivity you deserve. Women's Health care includes:

- Women's specific primary care, gynecology, mental health, social work, pharmacy and nutrition.
- A choice of gender when assigned your primary care provider; a choice of gender when assigned your mental health provider.
- Use of chaperones for sensitive procedures

For more information contact Women Veterans Program manager at (206) 764-2441



Mental Health Services

VA is integrating mental health care into the primary care setting. Veterans may receive mental health care from their primary care providers or from a collaborating behavioral health provider in the primary care clinic. Additionally, within specialty mental health clinics, VA provides outpatient mental health services at its medical centers and community-based outpatient clinics. Our goal is to support recovery and enable Veterans with mental health problems to live meaningful lives. Speak with your health care team if you would like to discuss your treatment options. VA mental health services and specialty programs include:

- Geriatrics & Memory Disorders
- Inpatient & Outpatient Mental Health Care
- Psychiatry Services
- Military Sexual Trauma
- Psychosocial Rehab & Recovery
- Residential Rehabilitation Treatment
- Homeless Veterans
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Substance Use Disorders
- Traumatic Brain Injury/Polytrauma

Suicide Prevention

The VA is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of Veterans through suicide prevention efforts.

Get immediate help if you notice any of these signs

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior, such as drug abuse or use of weapons

VA National Suicide Prevention Hotline:



Pick up the phone if you are experiencing any emotional crisis and need to talk to a trained VA professional. You'll be immediately connected with a qualified caring provider who can help you. Someone who can help you will answer right away; please also consider calling 9-1-1 if you are having immediate thoughts of harming yourself or someone else.

For more information: www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Social Work Services

VA social workers provide services to Veterans across the continuum of care and across all programs and settings. Social workers provide care coordination for psychosocial needs such as case management services for Veterans at risk for homelessness, frail elderly, catastrophic illness or injury, and terminal illness. Social workers can assist family members/caregivers as part of the Veteran's treatment. Social work may also assist with the following:



- Financial or housing assistance,
- Getting help from the VA or from community agencies, such as Meals on Wheels, so you can continue to live in your own home,
- Applying for benefits from the VA, Social Security and other government and community programs
- Discussing health care wishes and completing Living Will or Advanced directive

Advance Directives

What is an Advance Directive?

An advance directive is a legal form that helps your health care providers and family members understand your wishes about health care in the event that you are too ill to make your wishes known. For example, if you are unconscious from a motor vehicle accident or from any number of potentially life threatening acute or chronic conditions.

- Who would you want to make decisions for you?
- What type of health care would you want?
- What health care wouldn't you want?

Questions like these may be hard to think about, but they're important. That's why VA wants you to know about an *advance directive*, a legal form you can complete. There are two types of

advance directives: durable power of attorney for health care and living will. Your PACT team can provide you with these forms and may refer you to Social Work for assistance.

Long Term Care

Long Term Care includes a spectrum of services for Veterans who no longer require inpatient hospital care but need resources and support to facilitate functioning at the highest level. The goals of care are to restore Veterans to maximum function, prevent further decline, maximize

independence, and/or provide comfort when dying.

Services to help Veterans stay at home may include:

- home tele-health
- home-based primary care
- skilled home care
- home hospice
- home health aide services
- respite and adult day health care

Institutional long term care includes:

- VA Community Living Centers
- Contract Community Nursing Homes
- State Veterans Homes

Visit the website: Guide to Long Term Care for Veterans and caregivers: www.va.gov/Geriatrics/Guide/LongTermCare



Caregiver Support

VA is implementing caregiver support initiatives across VA medical centers. A variety of caregiver support services may be available including support groups, caregiver resource fairs, and other education and training. Additional information for caregivers can be found at http://www.caregiver.va.gov/

Questions?

Have questions about VA Caregiver Support Services? Contact VA's Caregiver Support Line: 1-855-260-3274

Patient Advocacy Program

A Patient Advocate is an employee whose job is to help resolve your issues. The Patient Advocacy Program is for all Veterans and their families who receive care at VA facilities and clinics. We want you and your family to have someone to go to for discussion of your concerns or complaints, or to offer a compliment. If you need help getting care or getting problems resolved, please contact the Patient Advocate.

American Lake

Located in Building 81 near the pharmacy, the Patient Advocate Office can be reached at (253) 583-2585 or (800) 329-8387, ext. 72585

Seattle

Located in Building 100, 1st floor near the

East Clinic; the Patient Advocate Office can be reached at (206) 764-2160 or (800) 329-8387, ext. 62160

Patient advocates are available at both locations

Monday-Friday, 9:00 am - 12:00pm and 1:00 pm-3:00 pm (except Federal holidays)



You can also reach the Patient Advocate Office by email at pugpatientadvocate@va.gov. Please be aware that this is <u>not</u> a secure way to share personal information. Please use this email only to make initial contact.

Eligibility and Benefits

Every year VA publishes a booklet, *Department of Veterans Affairs Healthcare Overview*, which contains up-to-date information on eligibility, enrollment, and VA health care benefits. You received a copy of this booklet when you enrolled in VA healthcare. You can also download the booklet at:

http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/library/pubs/healthcareoverview.

To get more information on VA health care eligibility and benefits, call toll-free (877) 222-VETS (8387).

VA Puget Sound Phone Numbers to Know:

Appointment Call Center (Centralized Scheduling)

1-800-329- (VETS) 8387, ext. 71234 (253) 583-1234

VA Toll Free Number

1-800-329-(VETS) 8387

Nurse Advice Line

1-800-329-(VETS) 8387, option 4

Prescription Refill Line

1-800-329-(VETS) 8387, press 3 for pharmacy

Eligibility & Enrollment

1-877-222-VETS (8387)

Patient Advocates

American Lake: Located in Building 81 near the pharmacy, Phone: (253) 583-2585

or (800) 329-8387, ext. 72585

Seattle: Located in Building 100, 1st floor near the East Clinic; Phone: (206) 764-2160

or (800) 329-8387, ext. 62160

VA National Suicide Prevention Lifeline



Veteran Benefits

1-800-827-1000 (for information on home loans, education, VA disability, life insurance, vocational rehabilitation, employment, and survivors and dependents benefits

Billing Statement/Co-Pay Questions

Call VA Health Revenue Call Center: 1-866-290-4618 (toll free) (5 am-5 pm Mon-Fri)

MOVE! Program Office

1-800-329-8387 (VETS) Extension 76683

Release of Information (ROI)

American Lake: Located in Building 19, Phone: (253) 583-1507

Seattle: Located in the basement of Building 100, Room BD-140, Phone: (206) 764-2014

Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC):

National call center for all three Valor Clinics

1-800-310-5001

Valor North Seattle (Lake City)

12360 Lake City Way NE Ste 200 Seattle 98125 Front Desk (206) 384-4382 Fax (206) 440-3137

Valor Bellevue

13033 Bel-Red Rd Ste 210 Bellevue, WA 98005 Front Desk: 425-214-1055

Fax: 425-453-1619

Valor Federal Way

34617 11th PI S Ste 301 Federal Way WA 98003 Front Desk 253-336-4142 Fax 253-838-3006

Bremerton CBOC (PACT)

925 Adele Avenue Bremerton, WA 98312 Phone: 360-782-0129 Fax: 360-377-8029

Mt Vernon CBOC (PACT)

307 S. 13th St.

Mount Vernon, WA 98274 Phone: 360-848-8500 Fax: 360-419-3700

Port Angeles Outreach Clinic (CBOC) (PACT)

1005 Georgianna St. Port Angeles, WA 98362 Phone: 360-565-9330 Fax: 360-457-0618

South Sound CBOC (Sterling Medical)

151 NE Hampe Way Chehalis WA, 98532 Phone: 360-748-3049 Fax: 360-748-3006

Websites to Know within VA Puget Sound:

VA Puget Sound homepage: http://www.pugetsound.va.gov/

National MOVE! Website: http://www.move.va.gov/

My HealtheVet website:http://www.myhealth.va.gov

Guide to Long Term Care: www.va.gov/Geriatrics/Guide/LongTermCare

Caregiver Support: http://www.caregiver.va.gov/

NOTES: